

# OFFICE OF **DIGITAL HUMANITIES**

# DIGITAL HUMANITIES START-UP GRANTS

Deadline: September 16, 2015 (for projects beginning May 2016)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.169

# Items referred to in this document needed to complete your application:

- □ Budget instructions
- □ Sample budget
- □ Budget form
- □ Instructions for data management plan
- ☐ Grants.gov application package and instructions

Also see the **application checklist** at the end of this document.

#### **Questions?**

Contact the NEH Office of Digital Humanities via e-mail at <a href="mailto:odh@neh.gov">odh@neh.gov</a>. Applicants wishing to speak to a staff member by telephone should provide in an e-mail message a telephone number and a preferred time to call. Hearing-impaired applicants can contact NEH via TDD at 1-866-372-2930.

# **Submission via Grants.gov**

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. NEH strongly recommends that you complete or verify your Grants.gov registration at least two weeks before the application deadline, as it takes time for your registration to be processed.

# **System for Award Management Entity records**

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, the applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM). You must therefore review and update the information in your organization's Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your organization's information or another award term. In order for your organization to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award, or receive payment on an award, the information in its Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record here. You may need a new SAM User Account to register or update your organization's Entity record. NEH strongly recommends that applicant organizations update (or, if necessary, create) their SAM Entity record at least four weeks before the application deadline.

# I. Program Description

The Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants program awards relatively small grants to support the planning stages of digital projects that promise to benefit the humanities. The program supports both new projects in early stages of development and efforts to reinvigorate existing or dormant projects in innovative ways.

Proposals should be for the planning or initial stages of digital initiatives in any area of the humanities. Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants may involve

- creating or enhancing experimental, computationally-based methods or techniques for humanities research, teaching, preservation, or public programming;
- pursuing scholarship that examines the history, criticism, and philosophy of digital culture and its impact on society, or explores the philosophical or practical implications and impact of digital humanities in specific fields or disciplines; or
- revitalizing and/or recovering existing digital projects that promise to contribute substantively to scholarship, teaching, or public knowledge of the humanities (for further information, see the question about revitalizing existing projects in the Frequently Asked Questions document, which is available on the <u>program resource page</u>).

Experimentation, reuse, and extensibility are hallmarks of this grant category, which incorporates the "high risk/high reward" paradigm often used by funding agencies in the sciences. NEH is requesting proposals for projects that take some risks in the pursuit of innovation and excellence. You can find a discussion of the forms that innovation can take in the Frequently Asked Questions document.

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants should result in plans, prototypes, or proofs of concept for long-term digital humanities projects prior to implementation. They can also be used to revitalize or recover projects in innovative ways that will allow greater access, reuse, and extensibility.

Two levels of awards will be made in this program: Level I and Level II.

Level I awards are small grants designed to fund brainstorming sessions, workshops, early alpha-level prototypes, and initial planning. In addition to early planning towards an experimental prototype, Level I proposals can identify a problem or research question, explore a research agenda, or discover appropriate methodologies or technologies for both new projects and projects in need of substantive revision or recovery. Outcomes for Level I projects would likely include reports, position papers, and plans for subsequent steps and future research or development. Level I projects may also fund conferences, workshops, or reports addressing specific topics related to the impact of technology on the humanities. Proposals should include specific plans for broad dissemination of project outcomes.

Level II awards are larger grants that can be used for more fully-formed projects that are ready to begin implementation or demonstrate proofs of concept. Level II proposals should therefore include a more articulated plan of work leading to concrete and tangible outcomes, such as working prototypes; detailed plans for upgrading existing or defunct projects in need of substantive revision, enhancement, or recovery; test beds; or demonstration projects. Applicants must state in their narrative which funding level they seek. Applicants should carefully choose the funding level appropriate to the needs of the proposed project. See Section II, Award Information, for more details.

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants support full-time or part-time activities for periods up to eighteen months. Support is available for various combinations of scholars, consultants, and research assistants; project-related travel; and technical support and services. Up to 20 percent of the total grant may be used for the acquisition of computing hardware and software. All grantees are expected to communicate the results of their work to appropriate scholarly and public audiences.

Successful applicants will be expected to create a "lessons learned" white paper. This white paper should document the project, including lessons learned, so that others can benefit from the grantees' experience. This white paper will be posted on the NEH website.

All proposals will be required to include a *data management plan* that discusses how research data will be preserved. (Please see the Application and Submission Information section for more details.)

# Types of projects not supported

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants cannot be used for

• projects that mainly involve digitization, unless the applicant is proposing an innovative method for digitization;

- the creation or conversion of a scholarly journal (however, the exploration of or planning for new modes of scholarly publication is allowed);
- recurring maintenance costs that would support only the day-to-day operations of existing projects rather than substantive changes or upgrades;
- recurring or established conferences or professional meetings;
- acquisition of computer equipment or software in excess of 20 percent of the grant total;
- creative or performing arts;
- empirical social scientific research;
- work undertaken in the pursuit of an academic degree;
- the preparation or publication of textbooks;
- projects that seek to promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view;
- projects that advocate a particular program of social action.

Applicants seeking to build or digitize collections, create general-use archives, or develop reference resources like dictionaries and encyclopedias should consider the <a href="Humanities"><u>Humanities</u></a>
<a href="Collections and Reference Resources">Collections and Reference Resources</a> (HCRR) program offered by the <a href="Division of Preservation">Division of Preservation and Access</a>. Applicants in the planning stages of their projects should especially consider the HCRR Foundations subset of this grant category.

Applicants seeking to plan and develop websites, mobile applications, games, and virtual environments that significantly contribute to public engagement with the humanities should consider the <u>Digital Projects for the Public</u> program offered by the <u>Division of Public Programs</u>. Applicants seeking to experiment with approaches to developing digital projects for the public are, however, welcome to apply for a Digital Humanities Start-Up grant.

Please contact Office of Digital Humanities program staff if you have any questions.

# Providing access to grant products

As a taxpayer-supported federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its grants available to the broadest possible audience. Our goal is for scholars, educators, students, and the American public to have ready and easy access to the wide range of NEH grant products. For the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants program, such products may include software code, algorithms, digital tools, reports, articles, and websites. For projects that lead to the

development of such products, all other considerations being equal, NEH gives preference to those that provide free access to the public.

# **II. Award Information**

Awards are for up to eighteen months.

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants have two levels of funding:

Level I Grants range from \$5,000 to \$40,000 in outright funding.

Level II Grants range from \$40,001 to \$75,000 in outright funding.

In the narrative, applicants must specify which level of funding they seek.

#### **Cost sharing**

Cost sharing consists of the cash contributions made to a project by the applicant and third parties, as well as third party in-kind contributions, such as donated services and goods. Cost sharing is not required for Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants. However, applicants are welcome to use cost sharing for start-up projects in which the total budget exceeds the NEH grant limit.

### Subsequent project phases

As the name implies, Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants support the initial phases of digital projects. Other NEH funding programs—including in particular the <u>Digital Humanities</u> <u>Implementation Grants</u> program—can support subsequent phases; however, the receipt of a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant does not imply (let alone guarantee) continued support beyond the completion of the grant.

# **III. Eligibility**

Eligibility is limited to

- U.S. nonprofit organizations or institutions with IRS tax-exempt status; and
- state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribal organizations.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Degree candidates may not be project directors.

Project directors may submit only one application to this program at a time, although they may participate in more than one Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant. They may also apply for other NEH awards.

When two or more institutions or organizations collaborate on a project, one of them must serve as the lead applicant and administer the grant on behalf of the others.

NEH generally does not award grants to other federal entities or to applicants whose projects are so closely intertwined with a federal entity that the project takes on characteristics of the federal entity's own authorized activities. This does not preclude applicants from using grant funds from, or sites and materials controlled by, other federal entities in their projects.

Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be reviewed.

# **IV. Application and Submission Information**

# **HOW TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION**

# Application advice and proposal drafts

Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants are encouraged to contact program officers, who can offer advice about preparing the proposal and the review process. Program officers can also review draft proposals, which are optional. Program officers' comments on draft proposals are not part of the formal review process and have no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, but applicants have found them helpful in strengthening their applications.

Program staff recommends that draft proposals be submitted at least six weeks before the deadline. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after that date. Draft proposals may be submitted by e-mail attachment to <a href="mailto:odh@neh.gov">odh@neh.gov</a>.

Successful projects will often incorporate multiple perspectives from a variety of disciplines, institutions, and communities.

Applicants are encouraged to examine the sample narratives from previously funded projects, which are available on the <u>program resource page</u>.

Your application should consist of the following parts.

#### 1. Table of contents

List all parts of the application and corresponding page numbers.

# 2. List of participants

On a separate page, list all project participants and collaborators and their institutional affiliations, if any. The names on this list should match the names mentioned in the staff section of the project's narrative description. This list should also include advisory board members, if any—as well as the names and institutional affiliations of any experts who have provided letters of support. The list is used to ensure that prospective reviewers have no conflict of interest with the projects that they will evaluate.

#### 3. Abstract

Provide a one-paragraph (up to one thousand characters, including spaces) abstract written for a nonspecialist audience, clearly explaining the project's principal activities and its expected results. This paragraph may also be used in the Project Information field in the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance—Short Organizational form. (Information about this form is available in the Grants.gov Instructions for Institutional Applicants document. You can find a link to that document on the <u>program resource page</u>.)

#### 4. Narrative

The narrative should not assume specialized knowledge, and it should be free of jargon. It should clearly define technical terms so that they are comprehensible to a nonspecialist audience.

Applicants should provide an intellectual justification for the project and a work plan. For Level I Start-Up grants, the narrative section should not exceed four single-spaced pages. For Level II Start-Up grants, the narrative should not exceed six single-spaced pages. All pages should have one-inch margins, and the font size should be no smaller than eleven point. Applicants may use any citation style and format, as long as they use it consistently.

The narrative should address the long-term goals for the project as well as the activities that the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant would support. Applicants should keep in mind the criteria (listed in Section V below) used to evaluate proposals. Applicants must state whether they are applying for a Level I or Level II grant.

Provide a detailed project description that addresses the following topics.

#### Enhancing the humanities

Provide a clear and concise explanation—comprehensible to a general audience—of the start-up activities and the ultimate project results, noting their value to scholars, students, or general audiences in the humanities. Describe the scope of the project activities, the major issues or research questions to be addressed, and their significance to the humanities. Show how the project will meet its objectives in innovative ways.

Provide a rationale for the compatibility of your methodology with the intellectual goals of the project and the expectations of those who would make use of the grant product. NEH views the use of open-source software as a key component in the broad distribution of exemplary digital scholarship in the humanities. If either the start-up project or the long-term project is not

predicated on generally accessible open-source software, explain why and also explain how NEH's dissemination goals will still be satisfied by the project.

If you are requesting complete or partial funding for the development, acquisition, preservation, or enhancement of geospatial data, products, or services, you must conduct a due diligence search at the Data.gov <u>list of datasets</u> to discover whether the needed geospatial-related data, products, or services already exist. If not, you must produce the proposed geospatial data, products, or services in compliance with applicable proposed guidance posted at <a href="https://www.fgdc.gov">www.fgdc.gov</a>. For further information on this requirement, please see <a href="https://www.fgdc.gov">Article 34</a> of the General Terms and Conditions for Awards.

#### Environmental scan

Provide a clear and concise summary of an environmental scan of the relevant field. The goal of an environmental scan is to take a careful look at similar work being done in your area of study. For example, if you are developing software to solve a particular humanities problem, please discuss similar software developed for other projects and explain how the proposed solution differs. If there are existing software products that could be adapted and re-used for the proposed project, please identify them and discuss the pros and cons of taking that approach. If there are existing humanities projects that are similar in nature to your project, please describe them and discuss how they relate to the proposed project. The environmental scan should make it clear that you are aware of similar work being done and should explain how your proposed project contributes to and advances the field.

#### History and duration of the project

Provide a concise history of the project, including information about preliminary research or planning, previous related work, previous financial support, publications produced, and resources or research facilities available. Work on projects initiated during the term of a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant is expected to continue after the period of the grant. Describe plans for that work and probable sources of support for subsequent phases of the project. If you seek to revitalize or recover an older project, briefly describe how—if at all—the project is currently maintained (for example, through institutional support or grant support). If you have the information, provide data documenting the project's usage.

# Work plan

• Describe the specific tasks that will be accomplished during the grant period, identify the computer technology to be employed, and identify the staff members involved. The start-up activities described in the proposal should be completed by the end of the grant period.

- Indicate what technical resources will be required.
- Describe plans for evaluating the results of the start-up activities. This
  evaluation should both look back on what the Digital Humanities StartUp Grant will have accomplished and look forward to how the long-term
  project goals will be achieved.
- If your project involves staging a workshop or conference, please include, as an appendix to your application, the agenda and a list of proposed participants or specific criteria for selecting participants.

#### Staff

Briefly identify the project director and collaborators who would work on the project during the proposed grant period and describe their responsibilities. Project directors must devote a significant portion of their time to their projects. All persons directly involved in the conduct of the proposed project—whether or not their salaries are paid from grant funds—should be listed, their anticipated commitments of time should be indicated, and the reasons for and nature of their collaboration should be explained.

If the project has an advisory board, provide a list of board members and a statement of its function in the biographies section of the application, which is discussed below.

# o Final product and dissemination

Describe the plans to disseminate the project results through various media (printed articles or books, presentations at meetings, webinars or training sessions, electronic media, or some combination of these). Explain how your white paper will detail the activities of the project and discuss its potential usefulness to the field.

Projects developing new software are encouraged to make the software free in every sense of the term, including the use, copying, distribution, and modification of the software. Open-source software or source code should preferably be made publicly available through an online repository such as <a href="SourceForge">SourceForge</a> or <a href="GitHub">GitHub</a>. Software should be thoroughly documented to promote its reuse.

# 5. Project budget

Using the instructions and the sample budget, complete the budget form (MS Excel format) or a format of your own that includes all the required information. (You can find links to the budget instructions, sample budget, and budget form on the <a href="mailto:program">program</a> resource page.)

All project directors will attend a planning meeting at the NEH offices in Washington, D.C. Directors should budget accordingly for a one-day meeting in the first year of the requested grant period.

If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs and it already has a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, submit a copy of its current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form. (See the instructions for this form in the Application Checklist at the end of this document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to the form, explaining a) that the applicant institution is not claiming indirect costs; b) that the applicant institution does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement; or c) that the applicant institution is using the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000). This option is not available to sponsorship (umbrella) organizations. Applicants who choose this option should understand that they must maintain documentation to support overhead charges claimed as part of project costs.

**Budget narrative (optional)** 

If needed, include a brief narrative supplement to the budget, explaining projected expenses or other items in the financial information provided on the NEH budget form. The budget narrative may be single-spaced.

Applicants are advised to retain a copy of their budget form.

# 6. Biographies

Include a biographies section that contains a brief, one-paragraph biography for each principal project participant. If the project has an advisory board, provide a statement of its function.

### 7. Data management plan

Prepare a data management plan for the project (not to exceed two pages). The members of your project team should consult this document throughout the life of the project and beyond the grant period. The plan should describe how the project team will manage and disseminate data generated or collected by the project. For example, projects in this category may generate data such as software code, algorithms, digital tools, reports, articles, research notes, or websites. Include as an attachment a description of the project data management. For further guidance on the content of this plan, please see Data Management Plans for NEH Office of Digital Humanities Proposals and Awards. (A link to this document is available on the program resource page.)

# 8. Letters of commitment and support

Include letters of commitment from other participants and cooperating institutions. (Note that the project director does not need to provide a letter of commitment.) Include letters of support (preferably no more than two) from experts in the project's subject area, the proposed methodology, or the technical plan.

# 9. Appendices

If applicable, include an expanded work plan, workshop or meeting agendas, a bibliography or list of works cited, use cases, wireframes, screen shots, or other project schematics. Materials in this section may not exceed ten pages.

#### HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

The application must be submitted to Grants.gov. Links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package can be found on the <u>program resource page</u>. Information on how to confirm that you successfully submitted your application is available <u>here</u> (PDF).

#### **Deadlines**

Program staff recommends that draft proposals (which are optional) be submitted at least six weeks before the deadline. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after that date.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov on or before September 16, 2015. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Late applications will not be reviewed.

# V. Application Review

Evaluation of the application will take into account both the activities proposed for the start-up project and the long-term project goals.

Evaluators are asked to apply the following criteria:

- 1. The intellectual significance of the project for the humanities, including its potential to enhance research, teaching, and learning in the humanities.
- 2. The likelihood that the project will stimulate or facilitate new research of value to scholars and general audiences in the humanities, or use new digital technologies to communicate humanities scholarship to broad audiences.
- 3. The quality of innovation in terms of the idea, approach, and/or methods under consideration, and the appropriateness of the technology employed in the project.

- 4. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant's clarity of expression.
- 5. The feasibility of the plan of work, including whether the start-up activities will significantly contribute to the project's long-term goals.
- 6. The qualifications, expertise, and levels of commitment of the project director and key project staff or contributors.

NEH expects grantees to provide broad access to all grant products, insofar as the conditions of the materials and intellectual property rights allow. For the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants program, such products may include software code, algorithms, digital tools, reports, articles, and websites. For projects that lead to the development of such products, all other considerations being equal, NEH gives preference to those that provide free access to the public.

# **Review and selection process**

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH Chairman on grants. The Chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available here.

# VI. Award Administration Information

Applicants will be notified by e-mail in March 2016. Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents by e-mail in April 2016. Award documents will identify the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements that pertain to successful applications. The <a href="Grant Management">Grant Management</a> section of the NEH website outlines all the responsibilities of award recipients, including anti-lobbying restrictions, in great detail. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their applications by sending an e-mail message to <a href="https://documents.org/documents/by-nc-mail-new-mail-

Grantees will be required to submit a white paper, which will be due within ninety days after the end of the grant period. This white paper should document the project, including lessons learned, so that others can benefit. This white paper will be posted on the NEH website.

### **VII. Points of Contact**

If you have questions about the program, contact the ODH staff at <a href="mailto:odh@neh.gov">odh@neh.gov</a>. Applicants wishing to speak to a staff member by telephone should provide in an e-mail message a telephone number and a preferred time to call.

If you need help using Grants.gov, refer to

Grants.gov: www.grants.gov

Grants.gov help desk: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a>

Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html

Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)

# VIII. Other Information

# **Privacy policy**

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the grant application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

# **Application completion time**

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that the average time to complete this application is fifteen hours per response. This estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at <a href="mailto:guidelines@neh.gov">guidelines@neh.gov</a>; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

#### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- □ Verify and if necessary update your institution's Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM). Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.
- □ Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with **Grants.gov.** Complete at least two weeks before deadline.
- Download the application package from Grants.gov. The program resource page on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. Alternatively, you can search Grants.gov for this program. The program resource page also has a direct link to the instructions for completing the package.

# Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.

- 1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance Short Organizational
- 2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs
- 3. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form
- 4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach the parts of your application as described in the guidelines:

ATTACHMENT 1: Table of contents (name the file "contents.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 2: List of project participants (name the file "participantslist.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 3: Abstract (name the file "abstract.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 4: Narrative (name the file "narrative.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 5: Budget (name the file "budget.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 6: Biographies (name the file "biographies.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 7: Data management plan (name the file "data.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 8: Letters of commitment and support (name the file "letters.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 9: Appendices (name the file "appendices.pdf")

5. Budget Narrative Attachment Form—Using this form, attach **only** a copy of the applicant institution's current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an agreement). (See the Grants.gov instructions for institutional applicants, which are available on the <u>program resource page</u>, for additional information.)

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). We cannot accept attachments in their original word processing or spreadsheet formats. If you don't already have software to convert your files into PDFs, many low-cost and free software packages will do so. You can learn more about converting documents into PDFs <a href="here">here</a>.

**Upload your application to Grants.gov.** NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on <u>federal holidays</u>), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to <u>support@grants.gov</u>.

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Information on how to confirm that you successfully submitted your application to Grants.gov is available  $\underline{\text{here}}$  (PDF).